

**Maj.-Gen. J. A. Dix:** The following official dispatches have just been received at this department:

**HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES,**  
ON FEDERAL POINT, N. C., Jan. 14,  
VIA FORTRESS MONROE, Jan. 17, 1865.

**Brig.-Gen. J. A. Hawley:**

**GENERAL:** I have the honor to report that Fort Fisher was carried by assault this afternoon and evening, by Gen. Ames's Division and the Second Brigade of the First Division of the Twenty-Fourth Army Corps, gallantly aided by a battalion of marines and seamen from the Navy.

The assault was preceded by a heavy bombardment from the Union fleet, and was made at 3:30 p. m., when the First Brigade (Curtis's) of Ames's Division effected a lodgment on the parapet, but full possession of the work was not obtained until 10 p. m.

The behavior of both officers and men was most admirable. All the work south of Fort Fisher are now occupied by our troops. We have not less than 1,200 prisoners, including Gen. Whiting and Col. Lamb, the commandant of the fort.

I regret to say that our loss is severe, especially in officers. I am not yet able to form any estimate of the number of casualties.

**ADJUTANT-GENERAL TERRY,** Brig.-Gen. J. A. Hawley.

**Fort Fisher, Monday, Jan. 16.—2 o'clock a. m.**

After a careful reconnaissance on the 14th, it was decided to risk an assault on Fort Fisher.

Paine's division with Col. Abbott's brigade was to hold our line, already strong, across the peninsula, and facing Wilmington against Hoke, while Ames's division should assault in the west end.

After three hours of heavy firing, the assault was made at 3 p. m. on the 15th. Curtis's brigade led, and as soon as it arrived on the west end of the island front it was followed by Pennyacker's, and the latter by Bell's.

After desperate fighting, gaining foot by foot and severe loss at 5 p. m. we had possession of about half the land front. Abbott's brigade was then taken from our line facing Wilmington and put into Fort Fisher, and on pushing it forward at 10 p. m. it took the rest of the work with little resistance, the garrison falling back to the extreme of the peninsula, where they were followed and captured, among others Gen. Whiting and Col. Lamb, both wounded. I think we have quite 1,000 prisoners.

I hope our own loss may not exceed 500, but it is impossible to judge in the night. Among the wounded are the commanders of the three leading brigades. Gen. Curtis being wounded, not severely, but Col. Pennyacker and Bell dangerously.

The land front was a formidable one, the parapet in places fourteen or fifteen feet high, but the men went at it nobly under a severe musketry fire. The marines and sailors went up gallantly, but the musketry fire from the east end of the land front was so severe that they did not succeed in entering the work.

The Navy fire on the work, judging from the holes, must have been terrific. Many of the guns were injured.

How many there were on the point I cannot say, perhaps 30 or 50.

**C. B. COMSTOCK,**  
Lieut.-Col. A. D. C., and Chief Engineer.

Another dispatch estimated the number of prisoners captured at 2,500, and the number of guns at 72.

General Grant telegraphs to this Department that in honor of this great triumph achieved by the united valor of the Army and Navy, he has ordered a salute of one hundred guns to be fired by each of the armies operating against Richmond.

**C. A. DANA, Asst. Sec. of War.**

**The Fight at Fort Fisher—Explosion of Gun—The Effect of the First Attack—Energy of Our Soldiers.**  
Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

**WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Jan. 17.—9 P. M.**  
Your correspondent, E. S., sends to this Bureau the following:

**HQs. EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,**  
OFF WILMINGTON, N. C., Saturday, Jan. 14, 1865.  
To-day has witnessed the first serious action in the war. Two of the heavy 15-inch guns on board of the monitors (different vessels), have exploded, killing two men and wounding four others. The accident in one case was owing to the premature explosion of the shell in the gun, and the other to the shell not being home.

The enemy sent down a steambot towing a barge

loaded with ammunition for Fort Fisher, this forenoon, being unaware that our forces were on the Cape Fear River. When the boat was about rounding to land, she was stopped and boarded by our forces and the whole institution captured. There was only a small party in charge of the boat and barge. While engaged in unloading the ammunition to save it, a gunboat came down from Wilmington and attacked our men, wounding Capt. James H. Reeve, commanding the 3d N. Y. Vols., by a shell, which crushed his leg below the knee. Your men were wounded, and it is reported, that one man was killed. A train was laid to blow up the barge if we had not held it. A gunboat was sent down to drive our men away, which shelled across the peninsula, not over a mile.

Artillery has been landed to-day which will be most useful, and so planted as to command the river. The Rebel gunboats are not iron-clad, and can be managed by our land batteries as soon as they can be planted on the river.

A citizen prisoner, captured last evening, reports that the Rebel garrison has been reinforced, and now numbers 1,200 men, all of whom are contained in the bomb-proof of the square "East" port. They have little or no ditch around the fort, but the parapet is between twelve and fifteen feet high, and the fifteen traverses are at least fifteen feet higher, or 30 feet above the beach level. These immense piles of sand, at a distance of a few miles, appear like a row of huge hay stacks. Between are the embrasures, where the heavy guns of the fort, seventeen in number, lie crumpled, and so far as appearances go, still nearly intact, notwithstanding the terrible hammering by the fleet. These high and mountainous piles of sand are a perfect protection against an enfilading fire, however strong. They swallow our shot and shell like the ocean, the only difference being that the more iron that is projected into them the harder they are, and the stronger they become to resist our shot. The fire of our monitors and gunboats, therefore, has been mostly directed square into the embrasures of the fort. A close inspection by the glass this morning, shows that two or three of the Rebel guns have been dismounted by the heavy fire. Any permanent breaches of such a fort, however, are wholly out of the question. A few carloads of sand may be displaced, which, under cover of the night, when our fire is suspended, can easily be shoveled into place again, and the fort is ready once more for a repetition of the fire.

The statement of Gen. Butler and of Gen. Weitzel, that the first bombardment had not materially damaged the Rebel work, might also have contained the additional remark that no possible amount of shelling could effect any purpose whatever against such a work.

Transitory information, obtained since our arrival here, is to the effect that during the first attempt to take Fort Fisher the Rebel gunboats were at no time withdrawn from their guns. During the heavy fire they were perfectly covered by small bombards or mortar-boats by the side of each piece, and were ready to port and open on any body of troops attempting to storm the work.

The people of Wilmington were greatly surprised at the coming of our forces a second time, and, as regards the citizens, they were greatly in doubt as to the real design. A direct attack on Wilmington was anticipated. This impression arose from our landing a mile and a half higher up the beach than on the former occasion.

A 30-pounder sea-coast gun, which was captured yesterday at the Mound Battery, was only loosely spiked by a mortar-iron nail, which was easily removed, and the gun has been trained upon them today. There was also a magazine full of ammunition captured, which will be found very convenient.

The energy of our soldiers in constructing intrenchments since they landed has been a theme of praise by every one. They began work at 3 o'clock in the morning, and at 10 a. m. a complete breastwork five feet high had been completed from the Flagstaff to the Cape Fear River, a distance of one mile and a half in a straight line, but following a zig-zag course it was probably two miles in length. At the same time the men were engaged all night in carrying on their shoulders bread and provisions a distance of two miles to the advance line now occupied.

The first man injured shortly after landing yesterday, was a Captain in the 104th New-York, wounded in the leg, a slight wound by a musket ball.

During last night the enemy in Fort Fisher fired at intervals down the beach, shelling our men, but nobody was hurt.

The shelling of Fort Fisher continued up to sunset by a large portion of the gunboat fleet and monitors. The Fort replied at longer intervals than during yesterday, and more busily than before. A large fire broke out in the fort and burned for about two hours this p. m. The monitors continued their fire after the body of the fleet had fallen off.

In all fairness I ought to correct my statement respecting the landing of the troops yesterday, so far as to say it was a boat's crew of blue jackets from one of the ships of the naval fleet who first landed on the beach. I do not know what ship they belonged to.

**The Latest—Bravery of our Troops—1,200 to 1,500 Rebels Captured—Explosion near Fort Fisher on Monday Morning—Anxiety for the Safety of our Men in the Fort.**  
Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

**WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Jan. 17, 1865.**  
One of THE TRIBUNE'S correspondents at Fortress Monroe has just sent a dispatch to Assistant Secretary Dana, from which the following is an extract:

**FORTRESS MONROE, Jan. 17.—121 P. M.**  
Nothing could withstand the bravery of our troops notwithstanding the garrison was composed of two thousand picked South and North Carolina troops. Gen. Whiting had expressed the belief that it was impregnable.

We have taken between 1,200 and 1,500 prisoners. Just as the Vanderbilt was leaving, at 7 1/2 a. m. Monday, a bright flash was seen to proceed from a point either within or near the fort. This was followed by a stunning report, which induces the belief that it proceeded from the explosion of the Rebel powder magazine just outside the fort. The greatest anxiety prevailed on board the Vanderbilt for the safety of our brave men who are quartered within the fort.

**The Rebel Account of the Capture.**  
WAR DEPARTMENT, Tuesday, Jan. 17.—9 P. M.

**Maj.-Gen. DIX, New-York:** The Richmond *Flag* of this morning contains the following account of the capture of Fort Fisher by the naval and land forces of the United States:

**FALL OF FORT FISHER.**  
The unwelcome news of the fall of Fort Fisher, commanding the entrance to Cape Fear River, was made this morning, and occasioned a sensation of profound regret. The capture of this fort is equivalent to the closing of the harbor of Wilmington by the enemy's fleet. It is situated about eighteen miles below the city, and was the main defense of the entrance to the river, and its fall therefore will prevent, in future, the arrival and departure of blockade-runners. How far this reverse may prove injurious to our cause remains to be seen, but at present we regard it rather an unfortunate than a disastrous event. The following is the official report:

**HQs. NORFOLK, Va., Monday, Jan. 16, 1865.**  
Hon. J. A. SEDDEN: Gen. Bragg reports that the enemy bombarded Fort Fisher furiously all yesterday day. At 4 p. m. their infantry advanced to the assault, a heavy demonstration at the same hour being made against their rear by our troops. At half-past 6 p. m., Gen. Whiting reports that their attack had failed and

the garrison was being strengthened with fresh troops. At about 10 p. m., the fort was captured at this time known, the garrison. No further particulars at this time known. R. E. LEE.

No dispatches have been received from Gen. Terry since that of Sunday night announcing the result of the assault.  
C. A. DANA, Asst. Sec. of War.

**FURTHER FROM REBEL PAPERS.**  
Richmond papers of Monday contain the following:

**WILMINGTON, Jan. 12.**—The Yankee fleet, consisting of about 20 vessels, attacked Fort Fisher on the coast this morning. No particulars are received from Gen. Whiting, who is commanding the fort.

**EDITORIAL.**  
The great winds of Saturday brought down the telegraph poles on the Southern line, and we are without information from Wilmington later than the 12th. On that day 20 vessels of the Yankee fleet attacked Fort Fisher at 7 o'clock in the morning, and kept up a tremendous fire throughout the forenoon. During the bombardment they landed troops in an unknown force five miles above Fort Fisher. Gen. Whiting is in command at the fort. This expedition is believed to be under the sole command of Porter, who has gone to work to show what he can do without Butler. All the monitors on the coast have been collected for the purpose, and it is said to be Porter's intention, if the attack on the fort fails, to attempt running them past there to see if Wilmington cannot be taken in the same way New Orleans was taken.

**LATER.**—We learned late last night that the enemy commenced his fire on Fort Fisher throughout Saturday and Sunday, but without the least injury to the fort. The party which landed above are attempting to throw up fortifications, but are obstructed by the Confederate artillery.

## LETTERS FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

**The Composition of The Force—Incidents of the Voyage—A Vessel in Distress—Blowing a Hurricane—Gen. Terry's Orders—Delay in Starting—Sickness in the Fleet—Arrival of the Fleet.**

From Our Special Correspondent.  
ON BOARD STEAMER BLACKSTONE,  
OFF HEADQUARTERS, N. C., Jan. 9, 1865.

The expeditionary force consists of the same troops which served on the first Wilmington expedition—viz: the Second Division, Twenty-fourth Corps, in command of Gen. A. Ames, and the First Division, Gen. Paine's, of the Twenty-fifth Army Corps—with the addition of the Second Brigade of the First Division of the Twenty-fourth Corps, commanded on this occasion by Col. Abbott of the Seventh New-Hampshire Volunteers. The latter is Gen. Hawley's old brigade, but the General is left in command of the division in the Army of the James at Fortress Monroe.

The transport fleet consists of twenty-one steamers, divided into first and second class, and a third class of small vessels and tenders. They are all excellent, sea worthy vessels, capable of riding out safely and comfortably any gale of wind at sea. Their commanders are mostly old or experienced officers. Gen. Terry's flagship is the *McClellan*, Gen. Ames has the *Atlantic* with 1,200 troops of the 1st Division on board. Gen. Paine, commanding a division of the Colored (24th) Army Corps, has his headquarters on board the *Champion*, carrying a large number of colored troops.

The expedition was quietly planned by Gen. Grant, and the troops put on board ship and started with the utmost dispatch. The transports, intended for taking the troops, started from Fortress Monroe early on the morning of the 4th; they reached Bermuda Hundred in the evening of the same day; took on board the troops during the night, arrived back to Fortress Monroe on the afternoon of the 5th and sailed at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 6th. The wind was blowing a fresh breeze from the south-east, with every appearance of a storm. By daylight the fleet had all disappeared outside of Cape Fear, with the exception of the *H. Livingston* and *Atlantic*; the latter, being of heavy draft, required daylight to safely pass out.

The wind increased to a gale from the south-south-east, by three o'clock p. m., which was directly ahead for the fleet. A heavy head sea greatly retarded the progress of the steamers, and the larger portion of them were obliged to heave to north of Hatteras and wait for the weather to moderate. The wind changing to the north-west made a smooth sea once more, and the fleet steamed toward Beaufort, where all the lighter draft vessels made a harbor. The *Atlantic*, *Champion*, *H. Livingston* and others of the large steamers heaved to some twenty miles off the bar, and remained at sea.

**THE NAVAL FLEET.**  
We found sixteen of the largest vessels of Admiral Porter's fleet at anchor off Beaufort bar, and some of them, probably, with the transport fleet, were riding at anchor in the smooth water of the inner harbor. Our steamer, the *Blackstone*, Capt. Berry, after putting Gen. Ames on board the *Atlantic*, steamed in toward Beaufort and anchored in eight fathoms, the town, Fort Mason and the fleet inside being in plain view. The wind, which blew a gale from the north-west on Saturday afternoon, had hauled round to north-north-east during Sunday night, and so continued up to the time we anchored near the outer buoy. At dark the wind had moderated to a light breeze, and the vessels lay almost motionless at their anchors during the night.

Up to this time (night of Sunday) it is evident that the rough weather has retarded the landing of the troops impracticable. If the object has been to conceal the movement from the enemy, that object has undoubtedly been defeated by the necessity of exhibiting the large part of the transport fleet in Beaufort harbor. It is only a day and a night's journey on horseback from this place to Wilmington, to say nothing of the probable arrangements which the enemy have for signaling along the coast. The presence of a large transport fleet at this point must, therefore, be already well known at Wilmington. The object cannot be mistaken. Still there is no remedy for bad weather.

**MONDAY, Jan. 9.**—Day opened cloudy, with a light air from the north-north-east, which increased to a moderate breeze at 10 a. m. The sun shone out clear at 11 a. m. Nothing indicating a movement either by the naval or transport fleet. The blockade-runner steamer *Julia*, recently captured at Wilmington, made her appearance at 2 p. m., and steamed in through the fleet. She had the English flag flying at the main, with a red burgee bearing the name "*Julia*" under it. The American ensign was hoisted at the fore. She is a rakish looking craft of about 500 tons American measurement, carries two masts without topmasts or yards, has two white smoke pipes set rakely fore and aft, her hull painted lead color. She is long and narrow, evidently made for speed, without any unnecessary houses or other top hamper, and altogether is a sassy looking vessel. She is deeply loaded, and no doubt has a valuable cargo intended for Rebel consumption.

The day closes cloudy, with a moderate breeze from east-north-east, barometer 30.6, to which point it has risen from 29.3, on Saturday afternoon.

**TUESDAY, Jan. 10.**—There is no perceptible change in the position of transport or navy fleet. The wind, during the night, hauled to the southward, directly in shore, and at 5 o'clock a. m. blew fresh, with a heavy swell rolling in from seaward. There was heavy rain at daylight. No prospect of suitable weather for landing troops. There is a heavy surf on Blackbeard bank, and also on the shore wherever it is visible. A thick haze obscures the harbor and hides the town from view. In anticipation of bad weather, which is already setting in, several vessels have gone inside the heads. The ships of war roll more heavily at their anchors. Some of the transports have got under weigh and gone off shore. Barometer 29.8 30 T.

## A VESSEL IN DISTRESS.

At 12 p. m. a hermaphrodite brig was observed coming in under short sail, her foremast split, and her ensign set Union down in the main rigging. As she came near the Blackstone her name proved to be the *Win. H. Bickmore* of St. George, Maine. All hands were working hard at the pumps. She rounded to within half a mile of the Brooklyn frigate, and a man was sent aloft to set the colors higher up in the rigging. Still no one in the fleet seemed to pay the slightest attention to the signal, and after waiting half an hour or more, Capt. Berry of the *Blackstone*, gave the order to heave the winches and get under weigh. It was blowing too fresh to render it safe to send a boat with a light crew.

After getting the anchor, which was a work of much labor, the ship pitched very heavily. Capt. Berry dropped under the stern of the brig and hailed him. The captain stated that his vessel was leaking very badly, that he had four feet of water in the hold, and that his "crew were all beat out." Afterward a naval tug came and ascertained the situation of the brig, and reported to the Brooklyn man-of-war.

**A HEAVY GALE OF WIND.**  
By 2 1/2 p. m. it had freshened to a gale, but the *Blackstone*, being a powerful and swift steamer made good headway against the heavy head sea. The *De Molay* was also making the best of her way off shore, and the gale continued to increase as night came on, and the ship rolled and pitched fearfully. Our excellent Chief Engineer, Mr. Hingwood, and his assistants contrived to get up a head of steam sufficient to preserve storage war on the ship. At dark the gale increased almost to a hurricane, hailing to south-south-west, and coming in squalls, with heavy thunder and lightning, and torrents of rain.

Everything movable on board was tossed about in the wildest confusion. Every one was obliged to hold on by night and main to prevent being dashed from one side to the other of the ship. The old sailors called it a hurricane, and your correspondent, who has seen something of "life on the rolling deep," can testify that for two hours it was a little the heaviest weather he ever experienced at sea. To those steamers that were off the coast the situation must have been anything but comfortable. The lights of the *De Molay* were occasionally visible through the driving storm. At 8 o'clock our ship was within three miles of the point of Frying Pan Shoals. At midnight the wind hauled to the south-west and so continued until morning. At sunrise on Wednesday, the 11th, the wind hauled to the north-west, and the vessels which had spent the night in the offing, once more steamed inshore toward the bar.

The brig before mentioned as in distress, still remains at anchor, and the Brooklyn at 10 o'clock sent a boat's crew on board of her to assist in keeping her afloat.

**ORDERS FOR SAILING.**  
At 1 o'clock p. m. (Wednesday, 11th), the following orders were received on board the transports lying at anchor off the bar. Barometer 30.3; wind fresh N. W. **HQs. EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,**  
Flagship *McClellan*, Jan. 10, 1865.

**GENERAL ORDERS, No. 3.—I.** On sailing from this point the transports will follow the naval vessels in the following order:

<i>McClellan</i>	<i>Idaho</i>
<i>Atlantic</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>
<i>Vanderbilt</i>	<i>Livingston</i>
<i>Champion</i>	<i>Franklin</i>
<i>De Molay</i>	<i>Gen. Lyon</i>
<i>Thames</i>	<i>California</i>
<i>Champion</i>	<i>Westcott</i>
<i>Gen. Dupont</i>	<i>North Point</i>
<i>Montana</i>	<i>Russia</i>

**Blackstone.**  
The distance between the ships will be as small as is consistent with safety. Due notice will be given of the time of sailing. In case of the dispersion of the fleet the signal will be given by a gun from four to five miles off shore. New York, N. C.

When the troops are to be disembarked Admiral Porter intends to place a division of his fleet close to, and parallel with the beach, so as to cover the landing of the troops. As soon as this division has taken up its position and anchored, the transports, except the *North Point* and *Blackstone*, will move in line from the *Atlantic* to the *Blackstone*, and the *Blackstone* will be within sight of the second line of naval vessels, and await orders. Should any vessel be missing, the next in order will close up and occupy her position.

The troops will be landed in the navy boats and the surf boats placed with transports in these last named boats near shore, their hoisting tackle ready to be used as soon as the anchors are dropped. Details of water will be sent from the navy to man them.

Probably the steamer *Edna Hancock* will be sent to the *Atlantic* to receive the troops on board of her, and take them north, and two hundred yards outside of the *Blackstone*, the *Hancock*, however, must not be waited for.

**III.** The men will land in heavy marching order, with three days' cooked rations and forty rounds of ammunition. The utmost expedition must be used in landing, and as soon as they are on shore the regiments will be formed ready to move. Commanding officers will be cautioned to get their men in hand as rapidly as possible, and not to presume to permit straggling from the ranks. By command of

**Brevet Major-General TERRY.**  
ADJUTANT-GENERAL TERRY, Asst. Adj. Gen.

The following private notes accompany the order line of the ships:

**HQs. EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,**  
STEAMER *McClellan*, Jan. 11, 1865.

**To the Senior Officer of the Fleet.**  
Should you General Order No. 3, which provides the order of sailing. We shall not tonight. Your steamer will take her place in line, and follow the other vessels when they leave, either with or without orders.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,  
ALFRED H. TERRY, Brevet Maj. Gen. Com.

Shortly before sunset the gunboats began to get under way, and to move out of Beaufort harbor and lie away to the southward, as if to take their appointed places in the grand line of march for Wilmington. Nearly all the gunboats and many of the transports were under way or leaving short, except the frigates and larger vessels of war. An hour later, the steamer *C. W. Thomas* was observed passing around among the fleet, and soon the order came, "Remain where you are until morning." Almost at the same moment the setting of the sun in a clear west, the full-orbed moon rose out of her sea-bed, shedding her brilliant rays over land and sea, and revealing with almost the distinctness of mid-day each vessel as she rose and fell upon the gentle ocean-swell. A multitude of lamps swinging from peak and flagstaff, in a vast semi-circle from north to south, lent a peculiar charm to the scene.

There are various methods of accounting for the order detaining the fleet, the most common of which is that some of the transports must be missing, not having reported since the gale of yesterday and last night. The most experienced in the weather on this coast express the belief that we shall have a smooth time to-morrow for the landing of the troops, but that immediately following the change of the moon we must look for an on, favorable change in the weather. It is a fall day today, the 11th, there is a light breeze from the north-west, and a perfectly cloudless sky. The old sailors claim it perfectly smooth. Every hour's delay now means time lost. It will take about eight hours' steaming from Beaufort bar to New Inlet—distance 60 miles—the fast vessels waiting for the slow.

**SICKNESS IN THE FLEET.**  
The sanitary condition of the troops, if reports be true, is not satisfactory. The troops have not recovered wholly from the effects of the first expedition. Upon their return they were obliged, many of them, to camp without any shelter, and they have been called away upon this second trip before they had time to cleanse themselves, or get over the effects of the late sea voyage, and its necessary exposure. There was a considerable number of the colored troops who had their feet frozen on account of being so closely packed on the transports that they could not move about to keep up circulation. On board some of the transports measles had broken out among the soldiers, and on the *Enterprise* there are twenty-five cases of pneumonia.

**SAILING OF THE FLEET FOR WILMINGTON.**  
**THURSDAY, Jan. 12.**—The night has been perfectly smooth, with scarcely enough to make the motion of the vessels perceptible. The sun rose clear; a light air blew off the land, which, with the town, the fleet, and all objects, is distinctly visible in the clear morning atmosphere.

At sunrise the gunboats are observed moving out of Beaufort harbor, the three monitors slowly following, and falling into line. The *McClellan*, Gen. Terry's flagship, steams out over the bar, and fires a gun as a signal for the transports to get under way. Admiral Porter's flagship, the *Malvern*, takes her way toward the armed fleet, and soon all is in motion on board the men-of-war.

About 10 o'clock the naval fleet got fairly into line, with the transports following. Shortly afterward these strangers came in sight from the northward, which proved to be the Governor Chase, Victor, and Thomas R. Scott, with troops on board. These are the vessels which we have probably been waiting for.

The weather could not be more delightful. In the historic language of Gen. Banks, "It is a propitious morning." The sea is as smooth as a millpond, a light air from the north-west just suffices to straighten out the hunting of the fleet, and brace the human nerves for the interesting campaign before us. The monitors have been taken in tow to assist their locomotion, and keep them along with the body of the fleet. At noon, the whole armada is under full headway, the head vessels—those of the navy leading the van—being quite lost to view by those bringing up the rear. It is a sight not seen more than once in a lifetime. Our course is S. by W., 1/2 West, distance 67 miles. The land of the North Carolina coast is in view, at a distance of about ten miles. The present rate of steaming—not over six or seven knots an hour—will bring us off New Inlet at 10 o'clock p. m.

The programme is now revealed. The troops will probably be landed by moonlight, and the attack upon Fort Fisher will be made at daylight to-morrow. By the close of Friday, Jan. 13, 1865, Wilmington will be ours, and the chief Rebel stronghold on the Atlantic coast closed to blockade-runners for all time to come. Appearances now indicate that the navy and army are to co-operate, and that the day of misadventures and blunders is at an end.

**THURSDAY NOON, Jan. 12.**—Fleet well under way, wind light from the south-west, steaming slowly and not making over six miles an hour. At 4 p. m. the whole fleet hove to close up the line. At sunset the vessels in the rear had all come up, and then they started again. The monitors have each a steamer towing, and get along as fast as any other portion of the fleet. The sun sets pleasantly, wind still light S. W., a smooth sea. Barometer 30.4 8.

**FURTHER ACCESSION TO THE FLEET.**  
8 o'clock P. M.—Since sunset four steamers have been added to our fleet, coming in from the eastward, and dropping into line as they fully understood the business in hand. They are too far off to ascertain their names, but are undoubtedly transports with additional troops. The whole fleet, strung out in line for several miles, with lamps swinging from masthead and flag staff, presents a truly picturesque appearance. We have come eighteen miles since six o'clock, and are now not more than sixteen miles north of Fort Fisher. During the evening the fleet has gradually drawn in toward the land, which, by the bright moonlight, is quite visible by the glass, at probably not over eight miles distance.

**LAND RO!**  
**NINE O'CLOCK P. M.**—The blockading fleet, lying off Wilmington, is already in view, and communication is going on by signal between the Admiral and that portion of the naval vessels lying at anchor. Their lights are visible to the remotest vessels in the fleet. It is now the evident intention to take advantage of the bright moonlight to place the transports, as well as the naval fleet, in position to-night, so as to put the troops ashore at daylight in the morning.

**ELEVEN O'CLOCK P. M.**—The fleet has just come to anchor, within a short distance of the point of disembarkation for the troops. The appearance of the large armada off the coast, as revealed by the numerous lights, which are seen as it were suddenly rising out of the sea, has evidently waked up the Rebel camps on shore. At 11 1/2 p. m. a large configuration was observed in the direction of Fort Fisher, which illuminated the country far around, apparently intended as a signal of the approach of the Union fleet.

The last order, received at 11:30 p. m., was to get under way at 4 o'clock in the morning, and report to Gen. Terry on board the *McClellan* for orders. Three destroyers came in and reported the garrison of Fort Fisher 800 strong, and Hoke's Division at Wilmington.

**FAVORABLE WEATHER—THE PROBLEMS AND GUNBOATS UNDER THE BELL—LANDING OF THE TROOPS.**  
—**TELEGRAPH FILED OFF FORT FISHER.**

**FRIDAY, Jan. 13.**—The day opens fresh, a clear sun, a bracing west wind directly off shore, a smooth sea, and all things as auspicious as could be desired for both army and navy.

According to the naval programme, at sunrise, the Brooklyn (frigate) leading the van, ranged in under the land, followed by the double-enders and other gunboats, and after getting in position, shelled the woods and old batteries where the enemy showed himself on the former visit. Not a Rebel shot was returned. On board the transports preparations were now made to disembark the troops. Boats were got out, and soon began to dot the water in all directions. The naval launches were promptly sent well manned to the troop ships, with flags flying, and pulled by the gallant blue-jackets from the ships of war. Meanwhile the New Ironsides, Commodore William Bafford, also commanding the monitor fleet, with his double and single-turreted monitors, had got into position off Fort Fisher, and at the first appearance of the sun, as if intending to make a good day's work